AL.1.871

Alberta
AGRICULTURE

August 25, 1987 SPECIAL EDITION

Research Report

SPECIAL EDITION

Breaking new ground!

Minister Elzinga announces the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute

The government of Alberta has had a strong commitment to agri-food research for many years. With the proclamation of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute Act on July 15, 1987, the province is embarking on a major new era in agricultural research. The Act creates a totally new body to, "co-ordinate, conduct, participate in, promote and support research in agriculture", and was brought forward by Minister of Agriculture, Peter Elzinga. The Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) will support long-term research programs, and promote and foster research co-operation between industry, government and academic agencies. Minister Elzinga said, "The creation of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute is a landmark in Alberta's agricultural research effort. The Institute will build on the strong research foundation established in the province over the past 25 years."

Alberta Agriculture Deputy Minister, H. B. "Ben" McEwen, agreed with that emphasis. "Agri-food research is complex, varied, expensive and essential. That's why it was so important that our efforts and spending—public and private—be co-ordinated to maximize results," he said, adding, "The Institute is the keystone of our progressive research effort."

Minister Elzinga recognized the necessity for the Institute after carefully reviewing the province's agricultural research activities. While excellent programs such as Farming for the Future, were in place for funding short-term research, there was a marked shortage of long-term programs. Improved co-ordination between research agencies and a stronger focus on priority research were required to make the best use of available funds. In addition, increasing private sector involvement in agricultural research was considered vital for expanding the province's technological base, meeting industry's needs, and shortening the time-lines of technology transfer. AARI was proposed as a joint venture between the uni-

(continued on back page)

Areas of emphasis

Research to be supported by AARI

* Soil Conservation Research - to study the causes of soil erosion and degradation to determine methods for conservation and management.
* Plant Biotechnology Research - to develop methods of improving plant characteristics using advanced techniques.
* Poultry Research - to promote applied research beneficial to poultry producers and processors.
* Food Processing Research - to investigate ways to increase the value of agricultural commodities, create new products, processing and packaging methods, develop new uses for familiar commodities, and improve consumer acceptance.
* Marketing Research - to improve our understanding of market operations, and market information in order to allow Alberta's agri-food industry to expand its share of existing markets and enter new markets.
* Farm Business Management Research - to develop strategies for solving management and financial problems.
* Veterinary Biotechnology - to encourage biotechnological research in the areas of vaccine production, genetic engineering, and the management of rumen bacteria to improve livestock production.
* Feed Crops Evaluation Research - to assess the nutritional value of Alberta grown feeds and develop high quality feeds adapted to local conditions.

by Bob Bogle
Chairman
Alberta Agricultural Research Institute

It is my very great honor to be selected by the Minister of Agriculture as the first chairman of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. As a farmer from southern Alberta, I know that research has produced the crop varieties and irrigation techniques which are the basis for much of our success. And agricultural research will be even more important in the future. Producers and processors in every part of the province will need technological advances to stay competitive.

The Institute — through its Board of Directors — will co-ordinate and fund the long-term research that must be undertaken now. The Board will be composed of:

- a majority of farmers and agri-businessmen
- the Deputy Minister of Alberta Agriculture
- the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at the University of Alberta
- a representative of the University of Calgary
- a representative of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine
- a representative of Alberta Advanced Education
- a representative of Alberta Technology, Research and Telecommunications or the Alberta Research Council
- a representative of Agriculture Canada
- a representative of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

I feel confident that the broad spectrum of representation from industry, government and academic sectors will result in a competent and capable Board. I am looking forward to working with that Board and the Executive Director of Research for Alberta Agriculture and his staff. Together, we will begin the important work of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, ensuring that agricultural research is carried out for the benefit of all Albertans.

Breaking new ground...continued from front page

versities, provincial and federal governments, and private agencies engaged in leading edge research.

AARI will be governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister of Agriculture. The first chairman of the Board is Bob Bogle, MLA (Taber-Warner). He brings a wealth of experience in both government and private sector pursuits. As a Government member elected to the Legislature in 1975, he has served as Minister of Social Services and Community Health with additional responsibility for Native Affairs. He later served as Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. Mr. Bogle left cabinet in 1986, so that he and his family could devote more time to their farm near Milk River. He is currently Chairman of the Government's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Caucus Committee.

Mr. Bogle explained that the Board will be comprised of farmers, agri-businessmen, and representatives of the major agricultural research agencies and of the Government of Alberta. He says, "With this membership, the Board will have a cross section of Albertans with first rate expertise in all aspects of agricultural research and development."

His assessment was echoed by Mr. Elzinga, "With a dedicated chairman and knowledgeable Board, the Institute will play a crucial role in helping Alberta's agri-food industry compete successfully in the international marketplace."

Research Report is published 10 times a year by Alberta Agriculture for Agricultural Producers and Processsors